

Message Text

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ACTION CU-05

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, OEXC, PINT, NI (OKEKE, E. I.)

SUBJECT: INTERVISITOR OKEKE

REF: LAGOS 8853

1. MEETING FOR WHICH OKEKE REQUIRED RETURN LAGOS BY OCTOBER 4 IS INTERVIEW CRUCIAL TO HIS BEING PROMOTED TO HEAD OF ECONOMIC AND ANALYSIS DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES. EMBASSY AND OKEKE DISCUSSED MEETING'S POSTPONEMENT WITH DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES LOLOMARI (WHO HAD THIS JOB BEFORE MOVING TO PRESENT POSITION), AND DECISION RELUCTANTLY TAKEN THAT IT COULD NOT BE, ALTHOUGH OKEKE WOULD REMAIN IN US UNTIL LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT BEFORE RETURNING FOR INTERVIEW.

2. COMMENT: EMBASSY CAN WELL UNDERSTAND OKEKE'S AND LOLOMARI'S RELUCTANCE TO INTERFERE WITH DECISION HANDED THEM BY HIGHER AUTHORITY. PAUCITY OF DECISION MAKERS PLUS FREQUENT TRAVEL AND OTHER INTERRUPTIONS MAKES IT EXTREMELY UNWISE FOR ANY UNDERLING TO INTERFERE WITH TIMETABLE WHICH AFFECTS HIS ENTIRE CAREER. MINISTRY OF MINES AND POWER OFFICIALS ARE ESPECIALLY WARY AT THIS TIME BECAUSE CHIEF OF STATE IS EXPECTED TO ANNOUNCE CHANGES DURING HIS OCTOBER 1 NATIONAL DAY SPEECH WHICH MIGHT HAVE REPERCUSSIONS ON THE MINISTRY'S LEADERSHIP.

3. EMBASSY HOPES THIS WILL HELP EXPLAIN NECESSITY FOR LAST-MINUTE CURTAILMENT OF OKEKE'S PROGRAM IN US. FACT THAT OKEKE MAY SOON BE ELEVATED TO IMPORTANT POLICY-MAKING ROLE

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MAKES HIM, IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, ALL THE MORE VALUABLE AS AN

INTERVISITOR. WILLINGNESS TO UNDERWRITE OKEKE'S TRAVEL COSTS INDICATES IMPORTANCE MINISTRY ATTACHES TO TRIPS OF THIS KIND (OKEKE AND FAWIBE ARE THE THIRD PAIR IN A SERIES OF PETROLEUM INTERVISITORS), AND EMBASSY'S GOAL OF GETTING THE MINISTRY INTO HABIT OF REGULARLY SENDING PETROLEUM OFFICIALS TO US AT OWN EXPENSE APPEARS NEARER.

4. EMBASSY'S NEGOTIATION WITH GRANTEES AND MINISTRY IN THIS INSTANCE, AS IN PAST, WOULD HAVE BEEN GREATLY AIDED BY KNOWING SOMETHING, HOWEVER LITTLE, ABOUT THE PROGRAM BEING PUT TOGETHER FOR THE GRANTEES IN THE US. EMBASSY IS FULLY CONFIDENT THAT THE PROGRAMMING AGENCIES ARE FOLLOWING AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS AGREED BETWEEN THE MINISTRY AND EMBASSY (LAGOS 7704) AND SO ADVISED THE MINISTRY, BUT WE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO PERSUADE THE MINISTRY THAT EVEN WEEK BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE DEPARTMENT AND GAI WERE UNABLE TO PROVIDE BRIEF INFORMATION REQUESTED IN LAGOS 7704, 8406 AND 8748.
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